

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4759

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 6751

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TU, GR

SUBJ: THE AEGEAN DISPUTE

1. THURSDAY MORNING (SEPT 2) I GOT IN TOUCH WITH GREEK AMBASSADOR COSMADOPOULOS IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN DEGREE OF HIS CONCERN OVER NEW COORDINATES FOR SISMIL'S SEPTEMBER OPERATIONS. COSMADOPOULOS HAD AS YET RECEIVED NO REACTION FROM ATHENS. HE DID NOT SEEM PERSONALLY AGITATED, AND HIS MAIN QUESTION TO ME WAS WHETHER THE NEW COORDINATES WERE FOR ALL REMAINING PLANNED EXPLORATIONS OR JUST FOR A SINGLE ADDITIONAL PHASE. (THE ANSWER IS THE FORMER WHICH I SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED TO COSMADOPOULOS.)

2. THAT SAME MORNING AND PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF SECRETARY'S MESSAGE, I ARRANGED TO SEE MFA SEC GEN ELEKDAG TO GO OVER MY CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO THESE LATEST COORDINATES. (THIS MEETING ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE LATE THURSDAY MORNING BY WHICH TIME I HAD RECEIVED SECRETARY'S MESSAGE.) IN RESPONSE TO MY EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN, ELEKDAG'S COMMENTS WERE AS FOLLOWS: HE SAID THAT AFTER THE SECURITY CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNCIL RESOLUTION, CAGLAYANGIL AND BITSIOS HAD MET BRIEFLY IN NY AND HAD AGREED TO BEGIN DISCUSSION OF THE AEGEAN SITUATION AROUND SEPT 10. BITSIOS, HOWEVER, HAD SAID THAT GREEKS COULD NOT ENGAGE IN THESE TALKS UNTIL THE SISMIL'S

OPERATIONS HAD BEEN SUSPENDED. CAGLAYANGIL HAD TOLD BITSIOS THAT THIS WAS A NEW CONDITION FOR THE TALKS, THAT THE WORDING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION HAD MADE NO REFERENCE TO ANY SUCH CONDITION. NEXT, ELEKDAG SAID THAT CAGLAYANGIL HAD TOLD THE GREEKS THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO WITHDRAW THE INTERNATIONAL COURT ACTION IF THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WERE TO PROCEED. I INTERRUPTED AT THIS POINT TO SAY THAT THIS APPEARED ALSO TO BE SETTING OUT A CONDITION THAT HAD NOT BEEN ENVISIONED IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. ELEKDAG SEEMED TO BE TAKEN ABACK BY THIS COMMENT. AFTER A PAUSE, HE SAID, "IS THAT SO?" THEN AFTER A FURTHER PAUSE, HE AGAIN REFERRED TO THE ALLEGED HABIB REFERENCE TO THE GREEKS WITHDRAWING THE COURT ACTION IF THE TURKS WENT ALONG WITH A CONSENSUS ACTION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL (ANKARA 6607). I THEN CORRECTED THE RECORD ON THIS PER STATE 213432.

3. ELEKDAG SAID THAT SUBSEQUENTLY THE TURKISH MFA OFFICIALS HAD CALLED IN GREEK AMBASSADOR COSMADOPOULOS TO SAY THAT THE SISMİK HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SCHEDULED TO CONTINUE ITS WORK UNTIL OCT 15. THE GOT WAS PREPARED TO CURTAIL THIS TO SEPT 25. IN RETURN, THEY WANTED THE COURT ACTION TO BE WITHDRAWN AND CONFIRMED THAT THEY WOULD BE READY TO BEGIN TALKS IN GENEVA ON THE 10TH OR 11TH OF SEPT.

4. I AGAIN INTERRUPTED TO REMIND ELEKDAG THAT HE HAD TOLD ME EARLIER THAT THE SISMİK OPERATIONS FOR THIS YEAR WOULD BE OVER IN MID-SEPT. IF SO, SAID ELEKDAG, HE HAD SPOKEN IN ERROR. THE TERMINAL DATE HAD ALWAYS BEEN OCT 15. (ON LATER CHECKING MY REPORTIN, I LEARNED I WAS IN ERROR. TEZEL, NOT ELEKDAG GAVE ME THE SEPT 15 DATE (ANKARA 6135). ELEKDAG THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE MINISTER HAD HAD A MAJOR STRUGGLE IN THE GOT TO GET THE DATE MOVED UP TO SEPT 25.

5. ELEKDAG SAID THAT COSMADOPOULOS HAD RETURNED SHORTLY THEREAFTER SAYING THAT THE GOT COULD NOT WITHDRAW THE COURT CASE AND COULD NOT ENGAGE IN BILATERAL TALKS AS LONG AS THE SISMİK'S OPERATIONS WERE ACTIVELY UNDERWAY. AT THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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POINT, SAID ELEKDAG, THE TURKS WERE IN A DIFFICULT POSITION, CAGLAYANGIL HAD GOTTEN INTERNAL AGREEMENT ON THE SEPT 25 DATE, BUT WHAT THE TURKS HAD WANTED IN RETURN FROM THE GREEKS WAS NOT TO BE FORTHCOMING. HOWEVER, ELEKDAG SAID THAT AFTER MUCH FURTHER DISCUSSION THE GOT HAD DECIDED TO ADHERE TO THE SEPT 25 DATE. HE SAID THIS DECISION HAD BEEN INFLUENCED BY PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSIDERATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH BOTH THE UPCOMING UNGA SESSION AND CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON THE NEW US-TURKISH DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT. AS A RESULT THE TURKS WERE NOW PLANNING ON THE AEGAN DISCUSSIONS BEGINNING IN NY SHORTLY AFTER THE 25TH. THESE SESSIONS COULD NOT BEGIN AT THAT TIME HOWEVER, ELEKDAG EMPHASIZED, UNLESS

BY THEN THE GREEKS HAD WITHDRAWN THE WORLD COURT CASE.

6. I THEN TURNED THE CONVERSATION TO THE LATEST COORDINATES OF THE SISMIC OPERATIONS AND ASKED ELEKDAG IF THE GOT WAS NOT CONCERNED THAT THESE COULD PROVOKE SUCH A STRONG REACTION IN GREECE THAT IT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED AT SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN NY AND AGAIN RISK THE ESCALATIONS OF TENSIONS IN THE AEGEAN. WHEN ELEKDAG RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT THINK THIS WOULD BE THE CASE, I SAID THAT SINCE ARRANGING MY MEETING WITH HIM I HAD RECEIVED A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY WICH HE HAD ASKED ME TO DELIVER TO FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL. I INDICATED THAT IN THIS MESSAGE SECRETARY KISSINGER EXPRESSED SIMILAR CONCERNS OVER THE COORDINATES. ELEKDAG REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT THIS LATEST TURKISH MOVE WOULD NOT HAVE THE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES WHICH BOTH THE SECRETARY AND I SEEMED TO FEAR.

7. OUR MEETING THEN ENDED BY HIS SENDING WORD TO CAGLAYANGIL, THEN ATTENDING A CABINET MEETING, THAT I HAD A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY FOR HIM, AND ARRANGING FOR ME TO MEET WITH CAGLAYANGIL AS SOON AS THE CABINET MEETING WAS DONE--AND BEFORE CAGLAYANGIL TOOK OFF FOR HIS WEEKEND RETREAT IN YALOVA.

8. WHILE WAITING FOR THE CABINET MEETING TO FINISH, I NEXT TALKED WITH MFA DIRGEN FOR POLAFF NECDET TEZEL. (TEZEL IS JUST BACK FROM NY AND IN ABOUT TEN DAYS' TIME EXPECTS TO TAKE UP HIS NEW DUTIES AS TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO ATHENS.) IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION, I NOTED ELEKDAG'S CONFUSION OVER THE ALLEGED HABIB CONSENSUS VOTE COUPLED WITH THE COURT WITHDRAWAL ARRANGEMENTS. TEZEL REPORTED THAT WHAT HAD BEEN SAID IN NY IS THAT IF THE TURKS WOULD "STOP" THE SISMIC OPERATIONS THE GREEKS WOULD "WITHDRAW" THEIR COURT ACTION. THE TURKS HAD SAID THEY COULD ONLY "SUSPEND" THE SISMIC OPERATIONS, THEN THE GREEKS HAD COUNTERED BY SAYING THEN THEY COULD ONLY "SUSPEND" THEIR COURT ACTION. TEZEL THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT FROM A LEGAL POINT OF VIEW, THE TURKISH LAWYERS NOW BELIEVED THAT TO SUSPEND A CASE AT THE WORLD COURT HAD THE SAME PROCEDURAL EFFECT AS WITHDRAWAL. HE ADDED THAT THE TURKS WERE NOW PURSUING THIS WITH THE GREEKS (BUT SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT WE NOT REFER TO IT IN OUR OWN DISCUSSIONS WITH GREEK OFFICIALS).

9. I SAID THAT MY MAIN CONCERN AT THE MOMENT WAS THAT THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED COORDINATES MIGHT CAUSE A NEW WAVE OF HOSTILE AND EMOTIONAL ACTION IN GREECE. TEZEL RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT THINK IT WOULD. THE SHIP WOULD CONTINUE TO STAY OUT OF "SENSITIVE" AREAS, HE SAID. I ASKED IF A MESSAGE HAD BEEN PASSED TO THIS EFFECT TO THE GREEKS OR IF THERE WAS SOME UNPUBLICIZED AGREEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. TEZEL BRISTLED AT MY REFERENCE TO AN AGREEMENT.

THERE IS NO AGREEMENT, HE SAID. THE TURKISH DECISION TO STAY OUT OF THESE SENSITIVE AREAS IS A UNILATERAL ONE. WHEN I ASKED AGAIN IF THE GREEKS HAD BEEN ADVISED OF THIS DECISION, TEZEL RESPONDED IN THE NEGATIVE. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, THEY ARE IN A GOOD POSITION TO MAKE AN ACCURATE GUESS.

10. SHORTLY AFTER THIS CONVERSATION, I DELIVERED SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO CAGLAYANGIL. CAGLAYANGIL'S COMMENTS BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.
MACOMBER

CONFIDENTIAL

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